

Storm King Inn  
Olympic National Park  
S. Side of U.S. Highway 101 (near Barnes Point)  
Lake Crescent Vicinity  
Clallam County  
Washington

HABS No. WA-156

HABS  
WASH.  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Storm King Inn (Olympic National Park)

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location: Township 30 N  
Range 9 W  
Section 26 W.M.  
South side of U.S. Highway 101 near Barnes Point  
on Lake Crescent, 19 miles southwest of Port  
Angeles  
Clallam County, Washington

date: circa 1928

owner: Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Olympic National Park  
600 East Park Avenue  
Port Angeles, Washington 98362

use: Currently used as a ranger station; soon to be  
demolished to make way for a realignment of U.S.  
Highway 101

significance: none

historian: Pamela S. Meidell

Historical Record: The Storm King Inn

The Storm King Inn stands on the south side of the Olympic Loop Highway (U.S. 101), sheltered by firs, spruce, and hemlock that only partially obscure a view of Lake Crescent. The lake, ten miles long and a mile wide, fills a 600-foot deep, crescent-shaped trough left by receding glaciers. Mountains rise sharply on all sides; Mount Storm King, at 4,500 feet, commands the highest point on the south side of the lake, with Pyramid Peak directly across from it on the north at 3,100 feet. According to local legends, natives of the Clallam tribe did not live in the area for fear of the "Schwoshh," spirits who protected Lake Crescent and its neighbor, Lake Sutherland. The "Schwoshh" did not deter Hudson Bay Company trappers, John Everett and John Sutherland, who discovered the two lakes and gave their names to them. Neither did they inhibit the settlers who began to homestead the area in the 1890s, after Lake Everett's name had been changed to Lake Crescent to reflect its shape.

One of these early settlers, Paul Barnes, a young marine engineer from Port Crescent, homesteaded the flat land at the base of Mount Storm King.<sup>1</sup> On November 4, 1896, the government issued him a land patent for lots five, six, and seven, which included the 135-acre delta of a small creek formed by an extinct glacier.<sup>2</sup> The Barnes family built the Marymere Hotel on this land, and gave their name to the glacier, the creek, and the point.<sup>3</sup>

In 1912, Paul Barnes sold off government lot seven, which included the northwest shoreline of Barnes Point, to Thomas Aldwell, a local real estate developer and promoter.<sup>4</sup> Aldwell and his wife, Eva, promptly built a house on the point,<sup>5</sup> and in 1920, subdivided the rest of the property into nineteen lots, known as the Lake Crescent Villa Sites.<sup>6</sup>

Before 1914, the only way to reach the resorts on Lake Crescent was by steamboat or by private launch. The Clallam County ferries, Marjory and Storm King, took over in 1914 and continued to transport goods and passengers even after 1922 when the county road went in. Lake Crescent's ferry era ended in 1925 when the Olympic Loop Highway (U.S. 101) was built along the south side of the lake. Resorts in the area then began to cater to motoring tourists.

Harry and Augusta Brooks joined the group of Lake Crescent resort owners when, in November of 1927, they purchased two acres of land in the southeast corner of Lake Crescent Villa Site number one, and made plans to build an inn.<sup>7</sup> Their property fronted the highway, and they planned to live in their inn and to operate a restaurant, store, and small resort. An actual construction date cannot be confirmed, but the Port Angeles City Directory first lists Storm King Inn in the classified business section

under Hotels in 1929.<sup>8</sup> If one assumes this was the inn's first season, then one can also assume that the Brooks built their inn between November of 1927, when they bought the property, and the summer of 1929, when the inn was open for business.

According to Norman Brooks, the innkeeper's nephew, Harry's sister, Daisy (Brooks) Firkins, and her husband Arthur, were partners in the inn with Harry and Augusta from the start. For unknown reasons, however, their partnership only lasted about two years, until 1930.<sup>9</sup>

The Brooks family was not new to the area. In 1910, Harry and his brothers, Edward and George, arrived in Clallam County from England, by way of Canada.<sup>10</sup> Edward, a renowned cougar hunter, homesteaded forty acres near Piedmont on the northeast side of the lake. Norman Brooks remembers cougar skins stretched and drying on racks leaning against the side of his father's hand-built cabin.<sup>11</sup> After Edward Brooks's wife left him and returned to her native Sweden, he opened the Lapoel Resort on Lake Crescent, which he operated for many years. George Brooks lived near Ovington on the northwest side of the lake with his wife, Beryl, making a living as a deck hand on the ferry, Marjory, while it operated and through construction work at other times.

Harry, a landscape gardener, left Lake Crescent and lived in Seattle for five years, where he met Augusta Erickson and married her. They worked together in Seattle as a caretaker and a cook for large estates, and brought these considerable skills with them when they moved to Lake Crescent to open the Storm King Inn. Norman Brooks remembers the rock garden his uncle created west of the main building (see WA-156-21). "Harry used to bring native plants back from his hikes in the mountains, and plant them in his rock garden."<sup>12</sup> Some of the rocks still remain. As for Augusta's skills, once the inn opened, "it didn't take long for the local folks to learn that she was a good cook."<sup>13</sup> Her Sunday dinners were especially renowned.

In its heyday, the inn consisted of the main building, housing the restaurant and store, and four rustic cabins set in a semi-circle against the trees, with a rock garden between the cabins and the main inn.

Like other residents and owners of resorts on Lake Crescent, Harry Brooks had his story to tell about President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's visit to the Olympic Peninsula in September of 1937; the president and his entourage stayed at the Lake Crescent Lodge (then known as Lake Crescent Tavern). Harry had been appointed a personal attendant to the President "because he was a Democrat." When he was carrying the bags into the President's room, the door suddenly shut behind them and Harry found himself alone

with the President. He was speechless, and after a long silence, embarrassed. Finally, to break the silence he mumbled, "The geese are returning early this year, Mr. President." Later, as a reward for acting as the President's attendant, Harry received a photograph of Lake Crescent with Roosevelt's image floating in the clouds above the lake. When Harry proudly showed the photograph to his brother, Ed, a staunch Republican and considerably glibber than his brother, Ed replied, "Oh, so that's why the fish aren't biting this summer."<sup>14</sup>

During the President's visit, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes also stayed at the Lake Crescent Lodge but "found out that the food was better" at the Storm King Inn.<sup>15</sup> Ickes reportedly ate at the inn often and, according to Norman Brooks, "my uncle Harry used to enjoy talking with Ickes, and called him a 'gruff, but great man.'" Ickes liked Lake Crescent so much that he returned to it in the summer of 1941 for a three-week vacation, living in the Morgenroth Cabin and taking his meals at the Storm King Inn.<sup>16</sup>

Harry Brooks gained peninsula-wide notoriety late in 1941 when he supplied the essential clue that enabled investigators to solve the mystery of the "Lady of the Lake."<sup>17</sup> In the spring of 1941, two fishermen had discovered a fully clothed female body wrapped with rope floating in the lake. After months of investigation, she was identified as Hallie Illingworth, a waitress in Port Angeles who had lived on Lake Crescent with her husband, Monty. Extradition proceedings brought her ex-husband and suspected murderer, Monty Illingworth, from California, and the trial began amid great fanfare. Harry Brooks, following the account in the paper, recalled that Monty, his neighbor, had borrowed a length of rope one night to "help tow a stalled car down the road." Monty had not returned the rope. Harry took his information to the prosecutor, and laboratory tests confirmed that the rope used to wrap Hallie Illingworth's body came from Harry Brooks' garage. Monty Illingworth was convicted on this evidence and sentenced to life imprisonment.

During their last season, the summer of 1944, the Brooks did not open the dining room. According to a brochure printed that year by all the Lake Crescent resorts, Storm King Inn offered, "four housekeeping cabins," three doubles at the following rates: \$3 a day, furnished; \$2 a day, unfurnished; and one single for \$2.50 a day, unfurnished. The store and the gas pump out front remained open.<sup>18</sup>

On March 26, 1945, Harry and Augusta Brooks sold the inn to William (Billy) Welsh, managing editor for the Port Angeles Evening News, and his wife, Florence, for \$7,700.<sup>19</sup> The property changed hands two more times before the National Park Service acquired it on November 16, 1950, from Frank and Ethel Donahue for \$20,900.<sup>20</sup>

(On May 19, 1947, the Welshes sold the inn to A.A. and Jennie Owen for \$12,650;<sup>21</sup> they in turn sold it to the Donahues on November 4, 1950, for \$20,950.<sup>22</sup>)

In a memo to the regional director dated December 5, 1950, Olympic National Park Superintendent Preston P. Macy reported:

The acquisition of Storm King Inn in some respects is a Godsend as it will provide for temporary interpretive work. It will not operate as a resort. The four cabins will answer our needs for quarters for seasonal naturalists and rangers and also trail crews. The four cabins are quite small and the inn has only two bedrooms.

In the early fifties the first naturalist at the Olympic National Park, Gunnar Fagerlund, took advantage of the construction skills of his summer crew to remodel an old outhouse from the Rosemary Inn into a kiosk.<sup>23</sup> They moved it to the Storm King Inn property and, from it, dispensed information to visitors. The Park Service eventually demolished the four cabins and the kiosk (date unknown), leaving only the main inn building to serve as what was then called the "Naturalist Information Center." According to Dick Thomas, the current (1983) ranger at the Storm King Ranger Station, seasonal fire crews bunked in the upper floor of the main building at one time.

A 1952 Park Service report lists the original value of the inn at \$11,885 (appraised in 1950), and the "present value before depreciation" at 14,868.<sup>24</sup> In 1973, the Park Service spent \$5,800 to construct a thirty-three-stall parking lot to the east of the main building.<sup>25</sup> The following year, the Service renovated the interior of the inn to accommodate new exhibits prepared by Harper's Ferry Center.<sup>26</sup> The park provided the original specimens for the exhibits.

In May of 1974, Larry Feser, the Lake Crescent Area Manager, reported a fire at the northwest corner of the "Storm King Visitor Center." To get to the fire, Feser and several others had to chop away "some exterior wallboards and skirting around the crawl space below the building." Actual fire damage consisted of charred support beams and floorboard undersides totaling less than 100 square feet. Feser suspected arson, since this fire resembled three arson fires that had occurred in the area within the previous two years.<sup>27</sup>

During the 1975 season (from late June through Labor Day), three volunteers and three seasonal naturalists staffed the visitor center, and provided information to 14,000 visitors.<sup>28</sup> The Park Service built a darkroom upstairs in the main building in 1977,<sup>29</sup> and constructed a boat dock across the highway in 1980.<sup>30</sup>

Through the years, the Storm King Inn has served the Lake Crescent area in many ways. Between 1928-29 and 1944, Harry and Augusta Brooks ran it as a small resort, restaurant, and grocery store. Between 1945 and 1950, the inn had three successive owners; its use during these years is uncertain. When the National Park Service purchased the inn in 1950, it served as a naturalist information center from which park employees and volunteers dispensed information to tourists. Under the direction of the Park Service, the inn has been the main contact point on Lake Crescent for visitors, functioning over the years as a first aid center, an interpretive center, a ranger station, and as lodging for seasonal employees.

In 1982, the National Park Service's Pacific Northwest Regional Office (PNRO), in Seattle initiated action to have the Olympic Loop Highway (U.S. 101) near Barnes Point realigned to remove a dangerous curve. A September 1982 Environmental Assessment Addendum for the Barnes Point Bypass recommended the removal of the Storm King Inn as the most feasible of three options.<sup>31</sup> In accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement signed in 1983 by PNRO, the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the inn will be recorded according to Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards prior to its demolition in the summer of 1983, ending fifty-five years of service to Lake Crescent's many visitors.

## Architectural Information: The Storm King Inn

### General Statement

Architectural Character: The builder of Storm King Inn borrowed a number of characteristics from various styles popular at the time of its construction, circa 1928. The inn combines craftsman, shingle and bungalow styles, and should be considered a product of the builder's own skill and imagination. Minor alterations to the building over the years have not greatly affected its original character.

Condition of Fabric: The exterior lap-and-shingle siding and cedar shingle roof are sound. Some minor moisture problems are evident at the wood foundation skirt and back porch addition. The interior, although altered over the years with addition and replacement materials, has been well maintained.

### Description of Exterior

Overall dimensions: The building is a story-and-one-half gabled roof structure with gabled dormers on the east and west slopes of the main roof portion. The structure is basically rectangular except for the enclosed porch addition at the rear of the building. The overall dimensions of the building are thirty-eight feet across the front elevation by fifty-nine feet deep, including the rear porch addition.

Foundation: Rubble masonry piers support six-inch square wood posts throughout the main portion of the building. Vertical one-by-four boards skirt the foundation. This foundation skirt is joined to the main wall structure with one-by-six horizontal trim boards topped with a beveled dripboard. A similar one-by-six board is also found at ground level, although portions of this member are missing.

The back porch rests on concrete piers and six-inch wood posts. These elements are exposed, as are sill beams and floor joists.

Wall Construction: Lap siding with a four-inch exposure is found in the first level of the main building and porch. Upper gables and dormers are covered with cedar shingles with an approximate four-to-five-inch exposure. There is no trim element separating these two materials. Five-inch corner boards are found throughout.



Structural System: The building is of two-by-four wood frame construction. Floor joists at both levels are two-by-twelves, sixteen inches on center. Roof rafters are full two-by-sixes, sixteen inches on center.

Porches: Both the front and back porches were added to the original rectangular structure. The front porch, with hipped roof, central gable, open eaves and rafters, was also modified by the National Park Service when they acquired the property in the early 1950s. The entry steps on the original front porch were under the central porch gable. The original railing was two-by-four construction, segmented into four bays, two on each side of the entry steps. Diagonal cross members divided each of the four railing bays.

The current porch has three two-by-six horizontal railing members, topped with a two-by-eight member. Steps are located at each end of the porch, east and west. The porch is slanted in a manner similar to that of the rest of the building.

The enclosed back porch is covered by a hipped roof. Double-pane awning windows are found on the south and west porch elevations. A three-panel, single-light door is found on the east elevation.

Chimney: A chimney of red, common brick is located on the north/south axis of the building. This chimney has a masonry hood.

Openings, Doors: A French door with matching sidelights provides access from the front porch to the glass-enclosed side porch. Access to the office spaces from the front porch is through a door with four-pane windows flanked by four-pane casement windows. Originally, a similar entry led from the front porch to the central living space. An exterior door was added to the east side of the building for personal access from the parking area when the National Park Service acquired the property.

Windows: Windows are generally an eight-over-one, double-hung sash type measuring two feet, eight inches by five feet. Pairs of these windows are found in the north and south elevations of the upper story and on the east side of the front elevation.

The glass-enclosed porch on the northwest corner has three section, sixteen-pane, wood cased sliding windows. They measure approximately eight by five feet.

Six-pane casement windows are found in the lower gable portion of the upper story on the north and south elevations.

Roof: A gable roof with open eaves and exposed rafters covers the main house portion. Two gables dormers are centered on both the

east and west slopes of the main roof. Roofing material is cedar shingles with an approximate eight-inch exposure.

Simple eave brackets are found on both the gabled sides of the main roof and dormers.

#### Description of Interior

Floor Plan: Although use of space in the inn changed when the Park Service acquired the property, very few interior changes have occurred. The Park Service used the space for exhibit display, office space, and storage. A fireplace that served the central living space of the inn has been covered. The stairway to the second floor has been modified to provide access from two rooms. (A darkroom has been sealed-off in the front portion of the once open upper story.)

Flooring: Original flooring material was tongue-and-groove fir throughout. The floors have since been covered with carpet, vinyl, and painted particle board.

Wall and Ceiling Finish: Original wall and ceiling materials were "cellotex," except on the original side porch where tongue-and-groove knotty pine was found. These original materials remain except in the central display area where vertical, rough sawn cedar is found.

Openings: Interior doors are generally a five horizontal panel type.

Trim: Windows and doors are trimmed in one-by-four painted pine. Top boards are square (not mitered) at the corners and slightly overlap the vertical pieces.

Mechanical Equipment: The building is currently heated with electric baseboard heaters. Originally, the central fireplace and oil stove connected to the central chimney provided heat.

Site: The inn faces north onto Highway 101. Lake Crescent can be seen through the trees looking in a northeast direction from the front porch of the inn. Mount Storm King rises at the rear of the building. A thirty-three space, paved parking area is located on the east side of the building. A public comfort station is located directly behind the cabin. The site is the trail-head for Marymere Falls which is located to the south. Natural vegetation surrounding the inn is typical to the dense, rain forest of the Olympic Peninsula.

Appendix A

Chain of Title for the Storm King Inn

- 1896 Homestead certificate no. 5568, application no. 16796,  
dated November 4, 1896, recorded in vol. 12 A, page 341.  
  
President Grover Cleveland  
To  
Paul Barnes
- 1912 Warranty deed dated September 14, 1912, recorded November  
23, 1912 in vol. 89, page 129.  
  
Nettie R. and Paul Barnes  
To  
Thomas T. Aldwell
- 1927 Warranty deed dated November 21, 1927, recorded November  
23, 1927 in vol. 116, page 222.  
  
Thomas T. and Eva M.E. Aldwell  
To  
Harry S. and Augusta Victoria Brooks
- 1945 Warranty deed dated March 26, 1945, recorded March 31,  
1945 in vol. 170, page 67.  
  
Harry S. and Augusta Victoria Brooks  
To  
William D. and Florence G. Welsh
- 1947 Statutory warranty deed dated May 19, 1947, recorded  
November 4, 1950 in vol. 216, page 32.  
  
William D. and Florence G. Welsh  
To  
A.A. and Jennie W. Owen
- 1950 Statutory warranty deed dated November 4, 1950, recorded  
November 4, 1950 in vo. 216, page 35.  
  
A.A. and Jennie W. Owen  
To  
Frank P. and Ethel D. Donahue
- 1950 Statutory warranty deed dated November 16, 1950, recorded  
November 18, 1950 in vol. 216, page 110.  
  
Frank P. and Ethel D. Donahue  
To  
United States of America

Notes

1. Jervis, Russell, editor. Jimmy Come Lately: History of Clallam County. A Symposium. Port Angeles: Clallam County Historical Society, 1971, page 403.

2. U.S. Government Land Patent, Homestead Certificate No. 5568, Application No. 16796, dated 4 November 1896, and recorded in volume 12A, page 341.

3. Russell, Jimmy Come Lately, 1971, page 403.

4. Warranty deed, dated 14 September 1912, recorded 23 November 1912 in volume 89, page 129.

5. Aldwell, Thomas. Conquering the Last Frontier. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1950, page 44.

6. Subdivision papers, dated 3 October 1920, recorded 8 October 1920, in volume 4, page 14.

7. Warranty deed, dated 21 November 1927, recorded 23 November 1927 in volume 116, page 222.

8. Polk's Port Angeles City and Clallam County (Washington) Directory, volume 1929 IX. County Business Directory. Seattle: R.L. Polk and Company Inc., 1929.

9. Brooks, Norman. Interview with author. Port Angeles, Washington, 17 February 1983.

10. Obituary, Harry S. Brooks, 9 November 1953, Port Angeles Evening News, page 6.

11. Brooks, Interview, 1983.

12. Brooks, Interview, 1983.

13. Brooks, Interview, 1983.

14. Brooks, Interview, 1983.

15. Brooks, Interview, 1983.

16. Draft Nomination Form, National Register of Historic Places, Storm King Ranger Station/Morgenroth Cabin, circa 1980. Citing 1979 statement of Katherine Morgenroth Flaherty. Pat Neal Papers, Clallam County Historical Society.

17. Heise, Jack. "Women Who Turned to Soap." Seattle Times, 4 February 1951, Sunday Supplement.
18. Preston P. Macy Papers, Olympic National Park Archives.
19. Warranty deed, dated 26 March 1945, recorded 31 March 1945 in volume 170, page 67.
20. Statutory warranty deed, dated 16 November 1950, recorded 18 November 1950 in volume 216, page 110.
21. Statutory warranty deed, dated 19 May 1947, recorded 4 November 1950 in volume 216, page 32.
22. Statutory warranty deed, dated 4 November 1950, recorded 4 November 1950 in volume 216, page 35.
23. Fagerlund, Gunnar. Interview by Syd Jacobs. Port Angeles, Washington, circa 1981.
24. Fixed Property Record, 25 August 1952, Maintenance and Property Files, Building No. 589, Olympic National Park Archives.
25. Annual Report 1973, I. Administration, B. Budget and Finance, Olympic National Park Archives.
26. Annual Report 1974, III. Interpretation and Resources Management, A. Resume of Interpretive Operations, Olympic National Park Archives.
27. Feser, Larry. Fire Loss Report, 18 May 1974, Maintenance and Property Files, Building No. 589, Olympic National Park Archives.
28. Annual Report 1975, Olympic National Park Archives.
29. Annual Report 1977, V. Maintenance and Rehabilitation C. Rehabilitation, Olympic National Park Archives.
30. Annual Report 1980, VI. Maintenance, Olympic National Park Archives.
31. Report of Survey (RS 9500-3-0003), United States Department of the Interior, 5 November 1982.

References

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Denboe, John. Storm King Visitor Center/Inn. Unpublished paper. circa 1982, Olympic National Park historical files.

Draft Nomination Form, National Register of Historic Places, Storm King Ranger Station/Morgenroth Cabin, circa 1980. Pat Neal Papers, Clallam County Historical Society.

Fagerlund, Cunner. Interview by Syd Jacobs. Port Angeles, Washington, circa 1982.

Heise, Jack. "Women Who Turned to Soap." Seattle Times, 4 February 1951, Sunday Supplement.

Lawrence, Emerson. Interview with author. Lake Crescent, Washington, 17 February 1983.

Obituary, Augusta Brooks, 13 January 1961, Port Angeles Evening News, page 6.

Obituary, Harry S. Brooks, 9 November 1953, Port Angeles Evening News, page 6.

Obituary, Mary Ann Brooks, 24 November 1923, Port Angeles Evening News.

Olympic National Park Archives  
Annual Reports, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1980.  
Maintenance and Property Files, Building No. 589.  
Papers of Superintendent Preston P. Macy.

Polk's Port Angeles City and Clallam County (Washington) Directory, vol. 1929 IX. Seattle: R.L. Polk and Co. Inc., 1929.

Russell, Jervis, editor. Jimmy Come Lately: History of Clallam County, a Symposium. Port Angeles: Clallam County Historical Society, 1971.